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| **Date:** | 20 February 2012 |
| **Subject:** | Fire crews go online for new skills |

Fire and Rescue NSW regional emergency crews are going online to develop critical skills in fire investigation in an innovative new training program.

Using live streaming video camera technology, regional fire investigators will be able to develop skills in fire investigation and engage in skills assessment activities.

“Regional students will gain theoretical knowledge online, while their practical skills will be captured using live streaming video camera technology. This information will then be transferred to assessors via the National Broadband Network (NBN),” says Kym Turnbull from the Canberra Institute of Technology, which is running the project with Fire and Rescue NSW.

The technology being trialled in this project is a novel way to assess critical skills and allows feedback to be given to students at the time of assessment. It is a key component of a recently endorsed national training program in fire investigation.

The speed at which the scene assessment can be transmitted will allow for timely feedback on performance and provide opportunities for trainees to further investigate fire scenes should critical evidence be missed.

“This program will also eliminate the time and cost of travel to a capital city – we are bringing the training to the students,” says Dr Turnbull.

After initial trails, the project will expand nationally to all states and territories.

This project has been made possible through funding from the National VET E-learning Strategy, whose NBN E-learning Programs provide opportunitiesto create innovative approaches to demonstrate the power of broadband to enhance outcomes for learners, and promote growth in broadband-based training as the NBN rollout proceeds.

The National VET E-learning Strategy is the responsibility of the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector.

“By sponsoring e-learning programs at NBN sites, we are expanding participation and access for learners, stimulating innovative approaches to training and employment, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce,” says FLAG Chair Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

**Core statements for editorial use**

* The National VET E-learning Strategy 2012-2015 (‘the Strategy’) is aimed at strengthening the Australian training sector’s use of new learning technologies, stimulating innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and employment, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* Investment in the Strategy will stimulate innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and improve the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* To enable the three-year program of action, government funding has been approved to:
* capitalise on the rollout of the National Broadband Network by demonstrating the benefits of the national investment in broadband
* support large-scale workforce development in industry through partnerships and comprehensive e-learning advice
* expand participation and access for individuals through e-learning programs delivering foundation skills and e-literacy
* The Strategy is managed by the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector
* The chair of FLAG is Mr Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

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